

THE BASICS OF PHOTOGRAPHING ARTWORK FOR WRAP SHOWS



Tips On Taking Quality Photos Of Your Artwork

You put a lot of time into your art, it's your best efforts, the reproduction photos you shoot of them should be equally as good. If your photos are too small, lack the proper resolution or out of focus, if there are problems with color, lighting or image distortion, you are not offering a true representation of your quality. Remember, these photos will be the first sample of your work that people will see and what the show judge will use to evaluate your work. If the images you provide are not good quality, you will make a poor impression.

WRAP Online Show Entry Requirements:

Email Instructions: In the email you send make sure you include your full contact information and confirm the complete information for each of your entries:

Example: Jane Smith
0000 Dover Street, Waukesha, WI.
Ph: 262.513.0000

- Entry #1: Title / Artwork Dimensions / Medium / For Sale?
- Entry #2: Title / Artwork Dimensions / Medium / For Sale?
- Entry #3: Title / Artwork Dimensions / Medium / For Sale?

Photo File Instructions:

- **Naming Convention:** The file name should consist of your Last Name, First Initial, Artwork Title, and Name of Show (i.e. Norway, Oconomowoc, Whitewater, etc.). Set all letters in lowercase, with no spaces, place an underscore to separate your name from the title and the title from the show. Example:

*lastnamefirstinitial_titleofwork_showname.jpg**

- **File Type & Quality:** Image should be 300ppi (pixels per inch) with the shortest side (or dimension) of the image at least 5". File type should be a hi-resolution digital JPEG image approximately 1MB in size or larger. Note: If image is smaller than 700KB it is not hi-res. If your cell phone gives you file size options when you email the file, select the one that is at least 1.0 MB or larger (actual size).

NO images will be accepted if they:

- include matting or framing
- are out-of-focus or pixilated
- unevenly lit, underexposed or overexposed
- have issues with glare, reflections, or distortion
- are digitally altered
- or are low-res website files

Example of what a good digital entry should look like:

Jane Smith's Norway WRAP entry "Schoolmarm"

- File name: smithj_schoolmarm_norway.jpg*
- File size: 5" x 6.5" 300ppi (1500px x 1950px) = 2.2MB
- File Type: Save file as a .jpg or .jpeg at "high" or "maximum quality" (number 12)

Example of what a quality entry photo of your artwork should look like:



**Since your cellphone's system gives the image file a numerical name such as IMG_0209.JPG, you will have to transfer your cellphone photos to your computer in order to change the name to the naming convention presented here. If you are not sure how to transfer cellphone images to your computer, the simplest method would be to email the photos to yourself, open your email on your computer and download the photos from there.*

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Equipment you will need:

With most modern digital cameras it's actually quite easy to take fairly good quality photos of artwork without any special equipment and very good results can be achieved using your smartphone camera. You may also want to consider renting a digital SLR from your local camera store.

It is important that you do not hand hold your camera and use some method of securing it from moving while taking your photos. Either a tripod of some kind, an inexpensive GorillaPod or a Smartphone selfie stick will work as long as the stick offers a tripod option (do not hand hold this device).

Some of the newer systems even offer remote triggers that can be used with your smartphone.

Additional items to consider: Several large sheets of white Foam Core board to use as reflectors (if shooting inside); A microfiber cloth to clean any dirt or smudges on the camera's lens and viewfinder; and if shooting indoors, several high wattage LED daylight light bulbs with a color temperature of 4800K - 5000K (Kelvins). For those of you using digital SLR cameras, you may also want to purchase or borrow a polarizing filter to remove glare and reflections that may occur in your art.



Cellphone Quality: The photo at right was taken by my daughter using her 4 year old iPhone camera. Other than cropping the image and a slight shift in the color balance to brighten the white of the plate, this photo is pretty much what came out of her cellphone camera.

Image Specs:

- **Location:** Photo was shot in our dining room.
- **Camera:** iPhone SE braced against dining room chair.
- **Lighting:** Over head light fixture with LED daylight rated 100 watt bulbs.
- **Image Size:** The original image size is an impressive 34.9 MB, 300ppi, JPEG photo 13.44" x 10.88." Very similar in size to my expensive Nikon Digital SLR.



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Photographing Artwork The Easy Way

While the methods presented in this document are not recommended for shooting photos to create high-quality printed reproductions of your art, they will give you good results to enter online WRAP shows. Bear in mind, all art shows have their own set of requirements and some may insist that you hire a professional photographer to shoot your photos. So it is best to consult the entry form of the particular show you are considering before investing your time in taking photos.

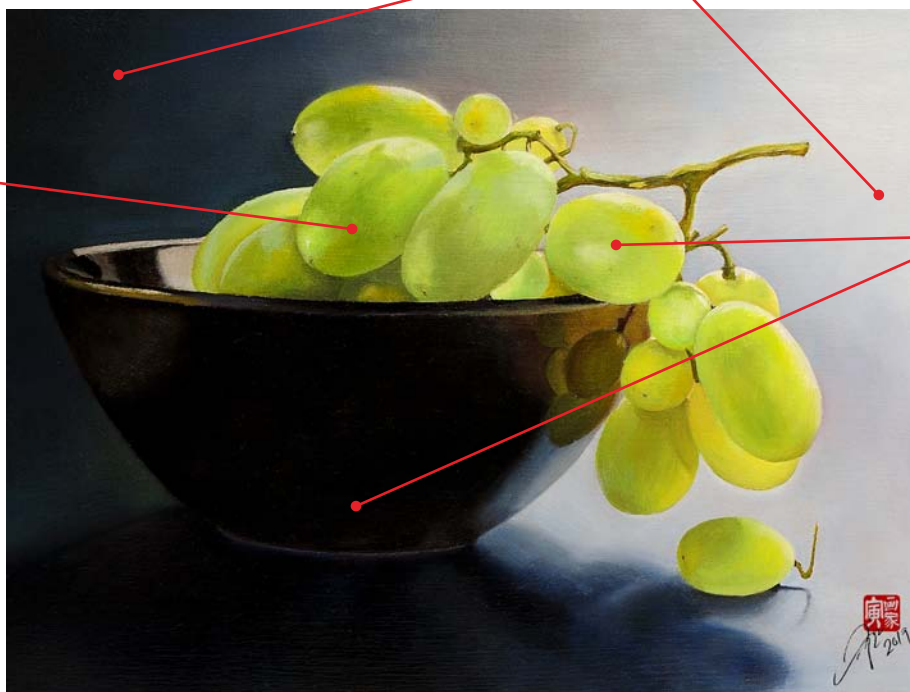
Key Points To Consider:

1. Hang Your Artwork: Hang your art on a wall that is neutral in color (either white, black or gray). If outdoors, place your art on your easel, making sure that it is 90 Degrees with ground. For best results, consider removing the frame if under glass. If this is not possible, make sure the glass is spotlessly clean and free of reflections and glare. This is where a polarizing filter will come in handy.

2. Even lighting: The image must be evenly lit from side-to-side and top-to-bottom, with no glare from flashes, window reflections, no shadows, dark corners, etc.

3. Sharp Image:

It is critical to make sure the camera does not move. Hand holding the camera is out since the slightest movement will cause a blurry picture. It is best to use your camera's self-timer or a remote trigger.



4. Color balance:

The colors in your photo must accurately reproduce those in your artwork.

*Photo example:
An oil painting
I completed and
photographed in my
studio using LED
Daylight rated
light bulbs.*

5. Light Source: Make sure you have adequate lighting to ensure a proper exposure. Over or under exposed photos will not faithfully represent your artwork.

6. Precise positioning: The camera must be exactly 90° to the artwork and at a suitable zoom level - image must fill the frame. If the picture is propped at a slight angle such as on an easel or against a wall, your camera must match that angle. But this is not recommended.

7. Post processing: Once you have a good photo you still need to ensure you optimized the color balance, crop out any background clutter or frames from the image and save it in a suitable format with an appropriate name.

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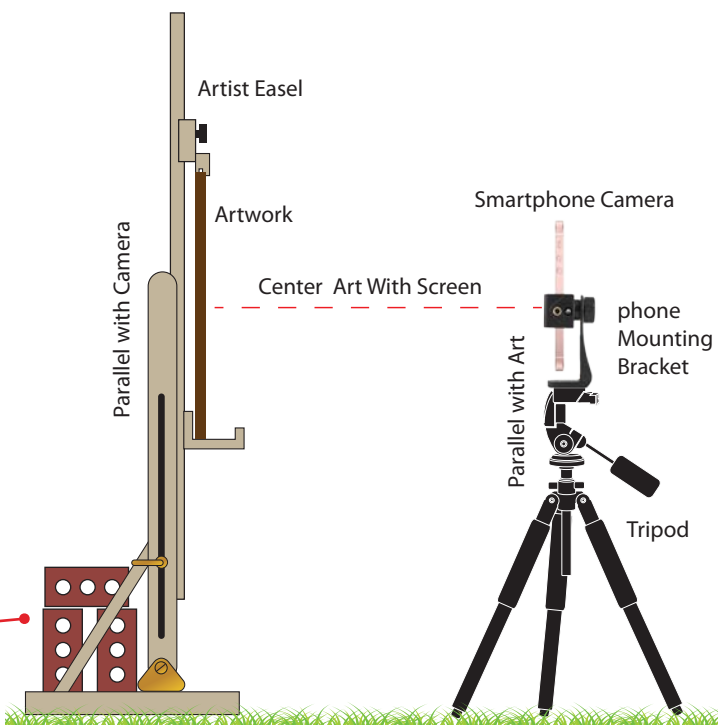


Simple Outdoor Solution:

- Shooting outdoors on cloudy days is probably the easiest solution you can use. So just wait for overcast weather and photograph your artwork outside. The 100% cloud cover in the sky acts as a gigantic soft-box giving a nice even covering of light. Note: Depending on the type of clouds, you'll get different types of diffused lighting.
- Avoid windy days, sunny days, direct sunlight, intermittent cloudy days and major shadow areas behind buildings or under trees.
- Find a place where there is direct uninterrupted light from above, free of clutter, buildings and trees.
- To ensure your image is sharp, it is important that the camera is not moved while the photo is being exposed. The best way to accomplish this is to use a tripod, an

inexpensive GorillaPod or Smartphone stand. Hand held selfie sticks will not work unless they offer a tripod option. If you do not have one of these options, a sturdy flat surface will work as long as the camera is balanced properly and clamped firmly in place.

- Pick a time when you have maximum light, which should be around 12:00 PM (noon).
- While propping your artwork against a support or wall can work, for best results you will want to use an easel to support your art, placing weights (rocks, bricks, etc.) on the base to keep it still.
- Make sure your Smartphone and art are lined up vertically with the center of your artwork in line with the center of the Lens of your camera. Focus directly in the center of your art. If for some reason your camera's auto focus is having trouble locking in, try moving the focal points around in your view finder.
- If art is unmounted, make sure it is clamped down on a board (1/4" thick drawing boards work great for this).
- Be sure to turn the Flash off.



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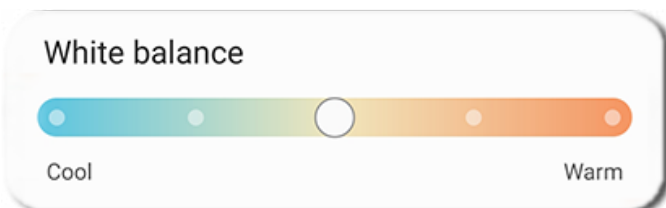
Shooting The Picture:

- Do not hand hold your camera or cellphone.
- Your camera's default ISO setting should be either 100 or 200. But if not and you have the ability to adjust this, set it to 100. Higher ISOs will cause pixilations or what we call grain in film photography.
- Use a microfiber cloth to clean any dirt or smudges on the lens and viewfinder.
- If you are indoors and using either natural light from a large window or a daylight rated interior light source, make sure you turn off all other room lights and the camera flash as they will interfere with the color balance of your picture.
- When taking the picture, use the self-timer to trigger the shutter to keep the camera perfectly still. This will create a delay from the time you press the shutter to when the image is actually taken. Or use a remote trigger release.
- If you want the best quality out of your camera, slightly zoom your lens in or out. Camera zoom lenses are never as sharp when they are zoomed all the way out or in, so you will get the best results somewhere in between.
- Set screen brightness on cell phones and computers to no more than 1/2 on the slider. Otherwise when you view and adjust your image it will darken and underexpose.

A word about White Balance:

Don't let the term White Balance frighten you, this just refers to the ability to adjust colors so that they appear more natural. There are different tone values in light that your eyes will easily adjust to, but your camera has trouble with. To compensate for this, cameras use special digital settings to adjust the white for different types of light.

The goal in photographing your art is to adjust the White in your cameras image to match the White Tone you see with your eyes. If the auto white balance in your camera is tinting orange or blue, try using one of the different presets such as Direct Sunlight, Cloudy, Shade, Fluorescent, Incandescent, etc. In cellphones, this is usually represented by a slider or different color images.



Quality Comparison Examples:



Good Exposure



Framed - Reflections in Glass



Underexposed



Overexposed



*Blurry - Out of Focus
Image Not Square With Camera*



Lighting Not Balanced

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Simple Cellphone Image Processing:

For the following examples I used the iPhone SE. While the terms and screen images may be different from your cellphone, the steps and procedures are the same.

Once you take the picture:

- Make sure your photo is sharp and in focus and the exposure looks good.
- Check to see how your image compares to your original work of art.
- Take several shots of your art even if you think you got it right the first time as you may notice small differences once you look them over.



Step 1: Click on your camera icon and position your artwork in the frame...



Step 2: Align camera with art. Make sure it is perfectly square, then take picture...



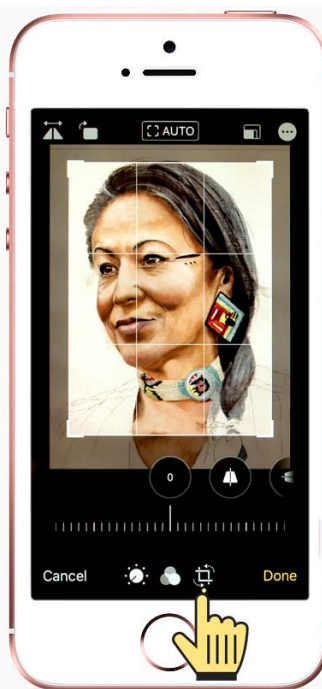
Step 3: Click edit function and compare photo to art, if changes are needed do Step 4 and 5...



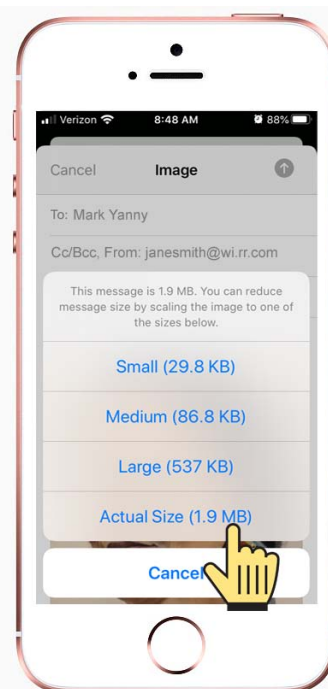
Step 4: Click exposure, move slider to correct if needed...



Step 5: Select proper White Balance to match your art...



Step 6: Crop image. If needed, remove frame or background.



Step 7: Save image with proper name and size (see page 1).

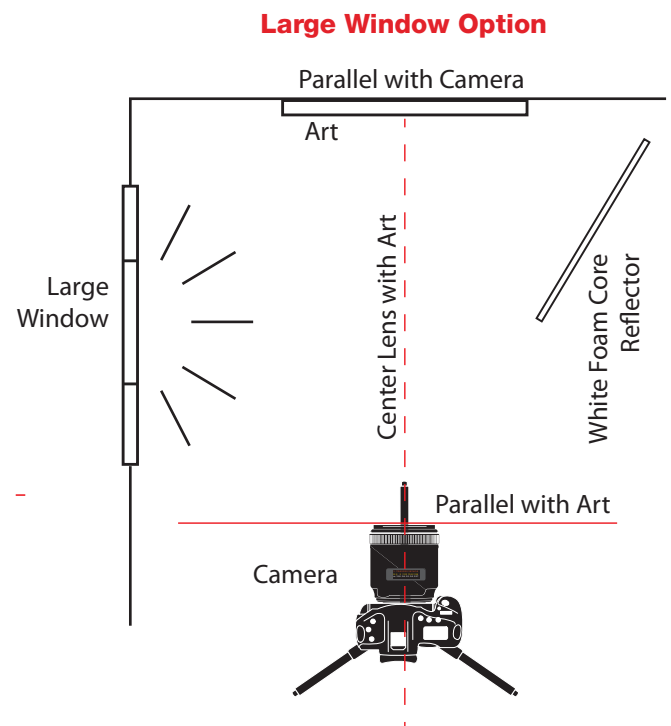
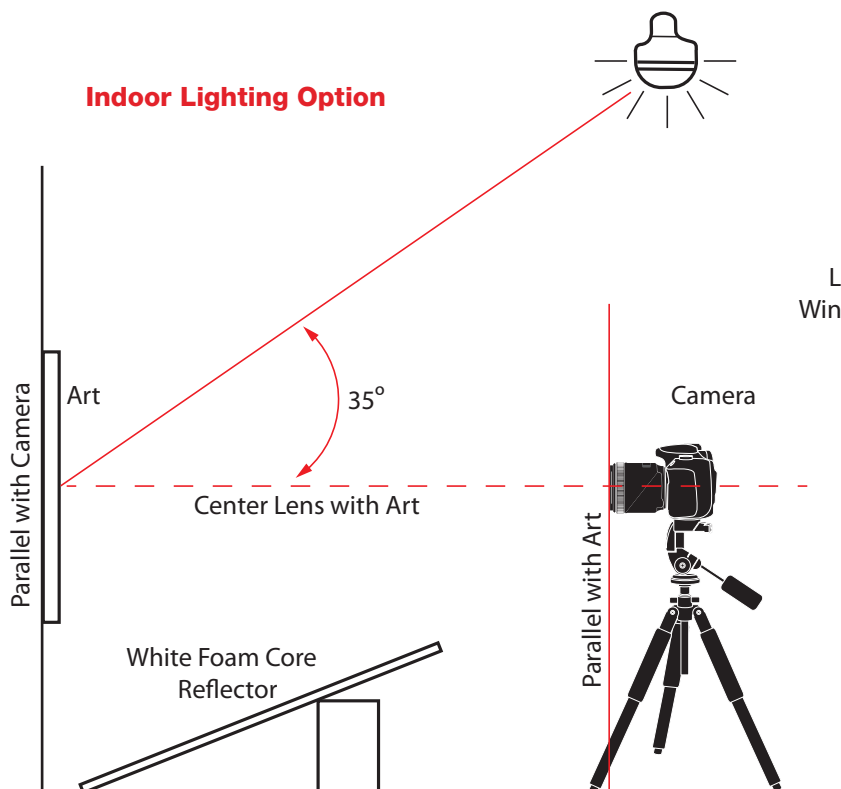
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Advance Method - Shooting Indoors:

Shooting indoors takes a little more care because unlike outside, you are working with artificial light and need to be extra careful that your lighting is adequate for the job.

- It is best to hang your artwork on a wall to ensure that it is parallel with the camera's lens and shutter plane. But if you have to prop it up on an angle, you must tilt the camera to match the angle of the work. Note, the center of your camera lens should be directly in line with the center of your artwork.
- Ideal background should be a neutral colored wall or solid surface of some kind, either white, black, or gray. Make sure there are no objects or surface texture and patterns to interfere with the artwork.
- Indoor LED daylight household light bulbs with a color temperature of 4800K - 5000K (Kelvins) will work best. Incandescent (tungsten) and halogen light bulbs tend to be too "warm" and florescent bulbs, unless color corrected, will be too cool or green.
- The brightness of your light source is very important. You will need to make sure you have enough light to provide an adequate exposure with an aperture setting of f8 or greater. Since you are using a tripod and self-timer, the shutter speed will not be as critical as the aperture setting.
- When using a single source interior light, make sure the fixture is above your artwork, as high as possible and back from the art at a 35° degree angle from its center. You may need to employ a white card strategically placed on the floor surface directly in front of your art to balance the light.
- If the artwork is on loose paper or poster board, you will have to clip or mount it onto a ridged board (1/4" thick drawing boards work great for this).
- Maximize the resolution of your camera by positioning the camera horizontally or vertically to match the format of your artwork and cropping the image in the camera's viewfinder so that your artwork fills as much of the frame as possible (see examples in above masthead).
- Adding large sheets of white foam core board on either side of your artwork to help reflect light into your art can also help to intensify and balance out the light.
- When taking the picture, using your camera's self-timer or a remote trigger to release the shutter will keep the camera perfectly still and produce sharp images.



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Advance Image Processing:

- Set screen brightness on cellphones and computers to no more than 1/2 on the slider. Otherwise when you view and adjust your image it will darken and underexpose.
- Once you take the picture, check to see if your image is too dark or too bright. If you find this is the case, use your exposure compensation feature in your camera to correct this.
- The color and exposure in your image should be as close as possible to your artwork. If not, check your camera's light meter and white balance settings and correct as needed. While you can make corrections later in your computer, you do run the risk of damaging the image file.
- Make sure your image is sharp and in focus. If it looks soft or blurry, there is a chance that the auto focus made a mistake while trying to lock in on your artwork or that the camera moved while exposing the image.
- Take several shots of your art even if you think you got it right the first time as you may notice small differences once you look them over on your computer.
- At the advance level, you should be shooting your images in the RAW format and processing them on your computer. If you do not have Photoshop or Lightroom, you can use Picasa for Windows, iPhoto for Macs, the processing software that came with your camera, or you can download a free open-source photo editor application called GIMP which you can find at the following address:

<https://www.gimp.org/>

Note, there are a number of good YouTube videos that give you step-by-step tutorials on using GIMP as well as processing Raw images in Photoshop and Lightroom.

Shooting When The Artwork Is Behind Glass

If you decide to leave your artwork in its show glazing (frame and glass), there are some special steps you will need to consider to ensure a quality image.

- Glass could cause an issue with your camera's auto focus function and have an affect on your white balance. You will also need to crop out the frame before submitting.
- Make sure the glass is spotlessly clean, clear of smudges and reflections. Readjust art position or lights if you see any glare coming from lights or other surfaces.
- If you are shooting with a digital SLR camera, using a polarizing filter will reduce or remove glare and reflections.

Final Steps:

- Create a WRAP show folder on your hard drive to store your images.
- Once you are happy with the photo results, download the images to your WRAP show folder. Now select the best image and open it up. Use the cropping tool in your processing software to remove all the background so you only see the piece of art itself, making sure to check for any visible borders around the edges. Zoom into your image to 100% and carefully look it over checking for anything that wasn't there in the original artwork. Use the retouch tools to remove any dust that may have shown up or any problem areas. HOWEVER, do not over edit the image in any way. The photo you supply must be exactly like your artwork.
- When you are satisfied with your image, save the file to your hard drive folder. Now edit the file size to match the required image settings as indicated on page one of this document and save the image to your show folder giving it a new name as described under "File Naming Conventions" on page one.
- At this point, you are ready to email your photos to the WRAP show coordinator.

This document was prepared by Jim Marsala for the WRAP program. If you have any questions or difficulties understanding the directions, feel free to give me a call and I will walk you through the process to answer any of your questions. Wishing you all the best!

Email: marsala_studios@wi.rr.com



MARSALA
STUDIOS

Ph, 1.262.513.8399
Fax: 1.262.513.9876